

# YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE TO WEST NILE VIRUS



[www.SDFightTheBite.com](http://www.SDFightTheBite.com)



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

To learn more about West Nile virus log onto  
[www.SDFightTheBite.com](http://www.SDFightTheBite.com).  
To report dead birds or mosquito breeding areas, or if you  
have further questions, please call the County of San Diego  
Department of Environmental Health,  
Vector Surveillance and Control Program

1-888-551-INFO (4636)

## WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS AND WHERE DOES

### IT COME FROM?



West Nile virus is an illness that is spread by mosquitoes. The first case of West Nile virus in the U.S. was confirmed in 1999. Until then it was commonly found in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

### WHO GETS SICK FROM WEST NILE VIRUS? ARE SENIORS AT GREATER RISK?

Even if you are bitten by an infected mosquito, your risk of getting sick is low. People who are infected with West Nile virus usually have no symptoms. Those who do have symptoms may experience mild fever, body aches and headaches. In some people, particularly those over the age of 50, West Nile virus can cause serious illness including encephalitis (swelling of the brain) or meningitis (swelling of the brain and spinal cord). If you have been bitten by a mosquito and experience these symptoms, contact your physician.



### HOW IS WEST NILE VIRUS SPREAD?

Mosquitoes become infected with the virus after biting an infected animal, usually birds. When an infected mosquito bites us, it can pass on the virus. People cannot transmit the virus to other people. Some cases of West Nile virus transmission during organ transplants and blood transfusions have been reported.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND MY NEIGHBORS FROM WEST NILE VIRUS?

When outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk, wear long pants and long-sleeved, light colored shirts. (This allows you to see mosquitoes before they bite you.) Insect repellent containing DEET effectively repels mosquitoes. Follow product label instructions carefully. If you have questions about repellents ask your physician. When indoors be sure door and window screens are tight fitting and in good repair.

Stop mosquitoes from breeding by removing sources of standing water from your property.

These include:

- ❖ neglected pools
- ❖ play equipment
- ❖ plant saucers
- ❖ decorative ponds
- ❖ spare tires
- ❖ birdbaths
- ❖ boats
- ❖ clogged rain gutters

Stock ornamental ponds with mosquito fish. These handy fish are provided free of charge through the Department of Environmental Health.

We can test dead birds to monitor the spread of West Nile virus. Report dead birds for collection and testing by calling (888) 551-INFO (4636).

By following these basic guidelines you can help protect yourself and your neighbors from West Nile virus. With your help the County of San Diego can monitor and minimize mosquito spread.

